

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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-----040481 071505Z /45
O 061534Z APR 78 ZFF6
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7648
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
WHITEHOUSE WASH DC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 10166

EXDIS (DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS)

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 4)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV PEPR XF IS US EG JO
SUBJECT: NEXT STEPS IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

REF: TEL AVIV 4580

SUMMARY: SAM LEWIS' POINTS RE ALLOWING TALKS TO SPIN OUT A BIT MORE ARE TELLING, BUT WE SHOULD ALSO WEIGH HOW MUCH TIME SADAT HAS TO DO SO. SADAT EXPECTS US TABLE BEFORE LONG A U.S.-PROPOSED DRAFT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND SEES LITTLE PROSPECT OF ARRIVING AT A MUTUALLY AGREEABLE TEXT WITHOUT THIS. ALTHOUGH CONVENTIONAL WISDOM HERE SUGGESTS TIME IS RUNNING OUT, SADAT AND SOME OF HIS ASSO-CIATES SPEAK OF SUMMER OR SLIGHTLY LATER. THIS WOULD ALLOW A BIT MORE TIME. TWO-TRACK IDEA SUGGESTED BY DAYAN HAS SOME MERIT IF WE CAN BE ASSURED WASHINGTON AND CAIRO READ PRETTY MUCH FROM SAME SHEET OF MUSIC WHEN IT COMES TO WEST BANK/GAZA IDEAS. FAILURE TO DO SO WOULD PLAY INTO ISRAELI HANDS AND BE HARMFUL TO PEACE PROCESS. BEFORE WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO TWO-TRACK PROCEDURE, SUGGEST WE SOUND
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OUT SADAT WHETHER HE AGREES AND WOULD BE WILLING USE OUR NINE POINTS AS BASIS FOR HIS ONGOING TALKS WITH WEIZMAN. WOULD ALSO MAKE IT EASIER FOR SADAT TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE WEIZMAN IF PROMISED ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON TAKES PLACE. END SUMMARY.

1. SAM LEWIS' POINTS (REFTEL) ARE TELLING, ALTHOUGH WE

SHOULD ALSO WEIGH HOW MUCH TIME SADAT HAS TO SPIN OUT TALKS BEFORE SOMETHING MEANINGFUL HAS TO BE ACHIEVED. SADAT EXPECTS US TABLE BEFORE LONG A USG-PROPOSED DRAFT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND STILL SEES LITTLE PROSPECT OF ARRIVING AT A MUTUALLY AGREEABLE TEXT WITHOUT THIS. I HAVE NOT TALKED DIRECTLY WITH HIM SINCE LAST WEIZMAN VISIT, BUT MUBARAK'S BRIEFING MADE IT CRYSTAL CLEAR THAT SADAT REMAINS SKEPTICAL THAT DIRECT TALKS WILL PRODUCE A SATISFACTORY DECLARATION. SADAT WOULD OF COURSE ALSO LIKE A BROADER "AMERICAN PLAN" AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME.

2. WE RECEIVE CONFLICTING SIGNALS ON HOW MUCH TIME SADAT HAS. CONVENTIONAL WISDOM IS THAT TIME IS RUNNING OUT. SADAT HIMSELF HAS SAID TO ME THAT HE CAN OUT-WAIT BEGIN AND HAS SPOKEN OF SUMMER AND, SEPARATELY, OF OCTOBER, 1978, AS DATES BY WHICH SOME TANGIBLE MOVEMENT MUST HAVE TAKEN PLACE. SAVVY PEOPLES ASSEMBLY SPEAKER SAYED MAREI SAYS NEXT TWO OR THREE MONTHS, BUT AGREES THAT SADAT COULD HOLD OUT UNTIL LAST HALF OF SEPTEMBER (WHEN UNIVERSITIES RE-OPEN). FONMIN KAMEL AND BOUTROS GHALI HAVE HAD GREATER SENSE OF URGENCY, BUT AFTER LAST AL FONMINS' MEETING KAMEL HAS CHANGED HIS TUNE A BIT. THIS BECAME EVIDENT WHEN, AFTER HEARING FROM GHORBAL THAT WE MIGHT TABLE OUR WEST BANK/GAZA NINE POINTS IN LATE APRIL, HE APPEALED FOR POSTPONEMENT ON GROUNDS OUR PROPOSALS LIKELY DISRUPT CURRENT EFFORTS TO REFORGE ARAB SOLIDARITY.

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(BUT KAMEL STILL HOPES FOR EARLY TABLING OF U.S. DRAFT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND BELIEVES GOE CAN DISCUSS CONCRETE DETAILS OF WEST BANK/GAZA SETTLEMENT ONLY AFTER SATISFACTORY DECLARATION IS ISSUED.) KAMEL AND GHALI ARE PROBABLY KEENER THAN SADAT IS ON RESTORING ARAB SOLIDARITY. THEY MAY BE ENGAGING IN WISHFUL THINKING, BUT SINCE REAL ARAB SOLIDARITY IS NOT LIKELY TO DEVELOP ANYWAY, THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE NO REASON WHY WE SHOULD NOT ACCOMMODATE KAMEL'S POSTPONEMENT REQUEST AND ALLOW A BIT MORE TIME.

3. TWO-TRACK IDEA SUGGESTED BY DAYAN HAS SOME MERIT IF WE CAN INDEED BE ASSURED THAT WASHINGTON AND CAIRO READ PRETTY MUCH FROM SAME SHEET OF MUSIC WHEN IT COMES TO WEST BANK/GAZA IDEAS. I UNDERSTAND THE NINE POINTS BROUGHT BY GHORBAL WERE MENTIONED BY PRESIDENT CARTER TO SADAT DURING CAMP DAVID TALKS, BUT I HAVE NO IDEA HOW SADAT REACTED. HE HAS NOT MENTIONED THEM TO ME. IF KAMEL'S PRELIMINARY REACTION IS ANY GUIDE, OR IF HE MANAGES TO INFLUENCE SADAT, WE AND SADAT MIGHT FIND OURSELVES SINGING DIFFERENT TUNES TO DAYAN AND WEIZMAN RESPECTIVELY. THIS WOULD PLAY INTO ISRAELI HANDS AND BE

HARMFUL TO PEACE PROCESS. SAM SEEMS TO THINK THAT CON-
CRETE IDEAS FOR WEST BANK/GAZA WERE DISCUSSED DURING RECENT
SADAT/WEIZMAN TALKS. PERHAPS SO, BUT ALL INDICATIONS HERE
ARE THAT THE TALKS DID NOT GO BEYOND GENERALITIES. THERE
IS ADMITTEDLY THE PROSPECT OF FUTURE TECHNICAL TALKS ON
THE SUBJECT INVOLVING BARAK OR OTHERS. IN CIRCUMSTANCES,
IT SEEMS TO ME THAT BEFORE WE IRREVOCABLY COMMIT OURSELVES
TO TWO-TRACK PROCEDURE, WE SHOULD HAVE A BETTER IDEA
WHETHER SADAT AGREES AND WHETHER HE IS WILLING TO USE OUR
NINE POINTS AS BASIS FOR HIS ONGOING TALKS WITH
WEIZMAN. (I ASSUME THESE POINTS WOULD BE BASIS FOR TALKS

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EXDIS (DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS)

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 4)

WITH DAYAN IN WASHINGTON.) IF SO, FINE; IF NOT, THE TWO
SETS OF TALKS IN CAIRO AND WASHINGTON COULD BE COUNTER-
PRODUCTIVE. I ASSUME THAT WE WOULD IN ANY CASE NOT ALLOW
BARAK, WHO APPARENTLY IS ENVISAGED AS A PARTICIPANT IN
WASHINGTON AND CAIRO TALKS, TO BE THE SOLE SOURCE OF
INFORMATION TO THE EGYPTIANS ABOUT WHAT IS SAID TO DAYAN
AND WOULD OURSELVES PROVIDE SADAT WITH COMPREHENSIVE
BRIEFING BEFORE WEIZMAN VISITS. UNLESS WE DO SO, WE OFFER
ISRAELIS OPPORTUNITY TO SOW DISCORD AND SUSPICION BETWEEN
EGYPTIANS AND OURSELVES AS TO OUR "REAL INTENTIONS."

4. ONE OTHER CONSIDERATION NEEDS BE KEPT IN MIND IN
CONSIDERING WHETHER TO SPIN OUT TALKS. AS I HAVE
PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, SADAT REMAINS UNDER HEAVY CRITICISM
FOR HAVING RECEIVED WEIZMAN WHILE ISRAELIS ARE STILL IN

SOUTH LEBANON. PROMISED ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL HAS NOT OCCURRED AND EGYPTIANS WILL SOON KNOW, IF THEY DO NOT ALREADY, THAT UN CONSIDERS LATEST ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL PLAN INADEQUATE. WHILE SADAT HAS USED AS A FIG LEAF PLEDGE IN WIEZMAN MESSAGE THAT ISRAEL INTENDS TO WITHDRAW FROM SOUTH LEBANON,
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CONTINUING ISRAELI FAILURE TO DO SO WILL INCREASE PRESSURES ON HIM NOT TO SEE WEIZMAN UNTIL THIS HAPPENS. SADAT MAY CHOOSE TO IGNORE THIS PRESSURE, BUT DOING SO INDEFINITELY WILL CAUSE HIM MOUNTING PROBLEMS AT HOME AND IN ARAB WORLD. EILTS

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